



Arlington Historic District Commissions Final and Approved Minutes

April 22, 2021 8:00 PM

Conducted by Remote Participation

Commissioners D. Baldwin, C. Barry, M. Bush, B. Cohen, S. Makowka, B. Melofchik,
Present: C. Tee, J. Worden

Commissioners N. Aikenhead, M. Audin, A. Frank Johnson
Not Present:

Guests: M. Crewe, E. Delanno, J. Raitt, S. Kirby C. Worthington, B. Sterling, D. Whitney,
K. Lancelotta,

- 1. AHDC Meeting Opens 8:00pm**
- 2. Approval of draft minutes from April 8, 2021.** C. Barry moved to table the minutes until next meeting. B. Melofchik seconded. Unanimous approval to table the minutes to next meeting.
- 3. Appointment of Alternate Commissioners** – Pleasant Street: alternates - B. Melofchik, M. Bush; Mt Gilboa: alternates - B. Cohen and B. Melofchik, Jason Street: alternates - M. Bush, B. Melofchik, B. Cohen.
- 4. Communications**
 - a. Application for rear deck replacement for 135 Pleasant St (Plumley).**
Replacement of 3rd floor porch decking. Wooden deck boards they want to use Trex type artificial decking. B. Cohen said you can't see it. S. Makowka said if there are no objections he would do a CONA. Not like with like but not visible from a point of public access. No objections. He will issue a CONA.
 - b. Email from neighbor E. Delanno re: chimney caps on Senior Center**
 - c. Application for 12 Elder Terrace (Silverman) for wall removal and installation.**
Reviewed by M Bush and D. Baldwin and deemed eligible for a CONA.
 - d. MassPres listserve topic:** S. Makowka advised Chris Skelly moving on from MHC position.
 - e. MassPres listserve topic:** S. Makowka advised Harvey Industries has decided to not make the True Channel storm windows. Asked for topic to be on agenda for next meeting so that we can discuss researching alternatives
 - f. S. Makowka got request from Eric Helmuth about energy efficiency in the HDs :**
He referred to information presented to Selectboard re: warrant article for TM and curiosity was satisfied for now he believes. There is some public interest in projects across town.
 - g. Update 51 Academy Street:** C. Barry said re: 51 Academy Street, we had approved a single retaining wall at the Baldwin's house and applicant has asked that we return to their initial proposal of two separate walls that they showed at the informal meeting. The grades won't work because the single wall will be too tall so they want to add a

terraced effect instead of one big wall. C. Barry as monitor wanted to know if he could approve it under his purview. Commissioners noted that they will look more like terraces. M. Bush is comfortable, B. Cohen is comfortable and thinks it is a better solution. No objections noted. C. Barry confirmed that walls will continue to appear to be dry laid stone. D. Baldwin said there's been discussion about plantings but not under Commission jurisdiction.

- h. **Central School:** B. Cohen went and visited the Central School to look at the chimney caps of concern with neighbor E. Delanno. They look like vent shafts and not chimneys. Do look fairly shiny though somewhat difficult to see. B. Cohen will reach out to them to follow up. The final design of the rails going down the front entrance aren't finalized yet.
- i. **Windows:** M. Bush reported that there has been a 12-15 email long chain on the Mt Gilboa neighborhood list general unhappiness with Commission's preference for wooden windows.
- j. **Pending application:** B. Cohen said she will be submitting an application for garage doors soon.

5. New Business

- a. **Formal Hearing for 251 Pleasant St. (Worthington) for perimeter fence install.** C. Worthington gave presentation. Moved in 2016 and they've been hoping to get a fence – concerned with a 3 and a 5 year old children on Brunswick and Pleasant which are very busy streets. Fence says welded steel, aluminum fence is not first option. Guidelines allow for welded steel but being so close to sidewalk it should be wrought iron according to C. Barry. J. Worden feels strongly that it should be wrought iron. Corner of Oak Knoll and Pleasant Street is an example of a wrought iron fence with similar design. The Commission noted that Ornamental Iron Works in Somerville has done some of the wrought iron work in the area. B. Melofchik asked what the price differential is for the steel fence vs wrought iron. In response to a question, the Applicant clarified that the fence would go behind the tree at the corner but he's not married to it either way and also that there is a blacktop (kind of - sort of) sidewalk along the Brunswick side. S. Makowka noted that it would look more traditional to follow the sidewalk around and if the tree was ever removed the tree, it would look very awkward. He noted that a black iron fence would disappear from view and would not significantly block the tree.

General Commission preference to explore wrought iron. The welded steel pickets to the railing would look very appropriate but connections rails to posts have non traditional look brackets where the vertical pickets are connected. The external brackets aren't desirable. We approved a fence on 53 Academy Street on sidewalk that is wrought iron. M. Bush said the design on the screen using the solid top rail is not very traditional. Commonly it would be a 2 rail fence with stubby pickets coming out the top. This is a 4 foot fence – we typically approve 32" but wrought iron can go higher. S. Makowka said the existing wrought iron fence at corner of Oak Knoll and Pleasant Street is 48" tall. He indicated that wooden picket fences are typically required to be lower.

S. Makowka asked to continue the meeting until next meeting. C. Worthington agreed to send an email allowing the hearing to be postponed to next month. The Applicant was also asked to provide an annotation to the plot plan showing where the proposed fence will be installed. Carol to send info on approved fence at 53 Academy Street

including certificate. M. Crewe, neighbor said pricing could be a major factor and should be taken into consideration. M. Bush is also sending info to applicant.

- b. **Formal Hearing for 20 Academy St. (originally incorrectly noticed as 20 Maple Street) (Town of Arl.) for signage.** S. Kirby gave presentation. Stated that J. Raitt is also attending from Planning Dept. and Bill Sterling from Sterling Assoc. Architects. Discussion on chimney caps – they are stainless steel. They were shiny but they did the light bead blasted finish as called for in the specifications. He noted that there was never any requirement for copper or copper look alike. The abrasive finish is on there as was granted. C. Barry commented that bead blasting should have produced a quite dull appearance, not shiny. B. Cohen said that while we did approve bead blasting chimney tops, what it looks like in the end is not what was expected by HDC. They are active louvers for ventilation. The color is what wasn't expected. It's a gray – it was bright with the sunlight. Intent was to be a matte finish and not draw attention to it being real shiny. B. Cohen will work with applicant to see the chimney caps.

The application for signage was presented. The proposed sign that would go on Maple Street where original sign was in the island on the half round driveway. Lettering and majority of sign is black and white but the Town Seal is in color. The sign itself is aluminum. Posts are granite. Original drawings showed sandstone but they changed that to go with granite to anchor to footings down below. J. Worden noted the sign was off center to the entrance and said sign should be kept on the same line as the doors since you can move the existing irrigation lines around. Center the sign will look more visually appealing. Granite posts will be trapezoidal shape. That shape picks up on the main building bottom courses with battered slope face. There are also some directional signs which are much smaller and less ornate, at the locations shown on the site plan. The one way signs will also be reinstalled. Temporary sign of canvas material for ACA will come down when new signage goes up. At this moment once the permanent sign goes up the “temporary” banners need to come down.

D. Baldwin asked about the black and white color scheme. Applicant noted that they pay a lot of homage to the building with the posts and they wanted to have a sign that was more contemporary. They came up with the very contemporary sign and used town seal to pay homage to traditional elements of the town. They feel it works very well and black and white is a very attractive contrast. A suggestion was made to incorporate more of a red color. The Applicant stated that they don't want to compete with the color of the building. B. Cohen said the sign will look dated at some point because styles move in and out. M. Bush said its not anything that he would vote against but noted that the lower slide in panels look like heck. S. Makowka said he suggests to that they might want to explore picking up some design themes used on signage at other town buildings. He noted that several years prior, there was an effort to develop signage that attempted to both unify signage and identify important places. S. Makowka will follow up and forward info to J. Raitt.

B. Mekofchik said she agrees with hesitation on modern aluminum, black and white non-historic sign and would like to see it have some resonance with the date the building was built. The building was built in 1894. Applicant stated that the intention is to modernize the building. E. Delanno abutter wanted to second that, in her opinion, it is quite modern and doesn't go with the architecture of the property. B. Cohen asked to continue it and would like the info researched on signage. D. Baldwin agreed and

he is not convinced that in a HD we want to make it a hip modern sign. J. Raitt asked S. Kirby to discuss the lead time and the status of the sign. They are looking to be at the end of the project. They have lead time on the granite posts and the sign. M. Bush said the granite posts are no problem it really is the contemporary sign. B. Melofchik said she feels the sign doesn't fit the building. It looks incongruous with such a well loved and elegant building in a HD that is part of the Town Hall complex that includes a great classical town hall, and is adjacent to the town gardens with restored fountain. This particular sign diverges from any kind of unity of the Town Hall block. E. Delanno, neighbor, agreed. J. Worden agreed with B. Melofchik also. C. Barry agreed and would like to see applicant respond to that.

M. Bush said he would like to approve the granite as it sits. S. Makowka noted that we rarely approve a partial project. Applicant stated that they can come back with different graphics and colors for next meeting. S. Makowka will send by Monday the info to the applicant. S. Perkins will send email agreeing to extension.

- c. **Formal Hearing for 161 Westminster Ave. (Lancelotta) for an addition.** D. Whitney, architect for project for Lancelottas gave presentation. Featuring garage and dining room is the addition. House faces Westminster and addition will fall behind on far side. Photos of house shown. Proposed addition flush with small 1 story volume and tucked behind the building. S. Makowka asked if they considered extending hip roof around so they don't have all complicated gable lines. The Applicant noted that the addition is on the side and not on the back and very visible. Like it is tucked in as much as possible. Complicated roofline from Montague elevation bothers S. Makowka. B. Cohen said it is more contemporary but is obviously an addition. Not in a bad way in her opinion. C. Barry feels it is a nice solution, very elegant, not trying to overcome the house. This in no way dominates the original structure. He likes it. M. Bush said in elevation A 2.1 he is troubled that the new gables are about a foot higher than the peak to the right and the way the roof lines line up seems odd. C. Barry agrees with applicant mistake to lower ridge or eliminate the gables. M. Bush said something along lines of taking existing ridge line and extending it through and making roof hip instead of gable. The Applicant noted that the height of roof is dictated by the windows on the 2nd floor. M. Bush said picture he showed, the viewers feet are at about the level of that roof. Very much looking down on that roof. Windows will be totally visible from Montague.

The Applicant clarified that everything is matching existing materials, including painted shingles, clapboards, cornerboards, water table, brick foundation, wooden carriage style garage doors. Existing doors, windows, porch. Suggestion to not put any wooden gutters in there. Also, the proposal includes fiberglass gutters. Windows are designed to match the existing windows on house. There is a stone wall that might have to move. The job would just move back, same materials just moved back.

C. Barry moved that the proposed addition be accepted as submitted by applicant. Seconded by D. Baldwin. Roll call vote – D. Baldwin – y, J. Worden -y B. Cohen - y, C. Barry – y, C. Tee – y, M. Bush – abstain, B. Melofchik – y. Approved. Monitor appointed B. Cohen

- d. **Informal Hearing for 46 Jason Street (Brown) for raised beds.** Homeowner on Jason street was putting in raised beds and was notified that they need to come before

the AHDC which they were not aware of. S. Makowka noted that the pending update to the Guidelines have not been added to the website yet but that he had forwarded them to the homeowner. The homeowner submitted an application specifying a low 16" bed, a height that he noted was within our guidelines. The Applicant was not present and this was only an informal hearing, but S. Makowka indicated that the Applicant was looking for feedback to know if this would be approved. It was noted that there was a sketch included showing 2 possible locations for the proposed bed. M. Bush said he would be ok with a 10 day. J. Worden doesn't like these things in the front yard and doesn't feel a 10 day is ok with him. C. Tee said there is not much of a front yard and because there are no dimensions on the sketch there is not much room to tell where it is further back. Her question is could it be at least level with the foundation if not slightly behind? M. Bush said there's a bush in the way. Some Commissioners noted that the preferred location is between stump and existing bush next to driveway and near the porch. B. Melofchik asked how far away house with raised beds in front yard is located – across the street and couple of doors away. She has no problem with a 10 day. C. Tee said she knows of a neighbor not happy so we will put on for a formal hearing. M. Bush asked that we a) issue a 10 day and b) issue a notice in lieu of a formal hearing. M. Bush moved that the raised bed in the position behind the stump is so insubstantial to the purposes of the District that a formal hearing can be waived subject to a 10-day notice to abutting neighbors. Seconded by B. Melofchik. Roll call vote: D Baldwin – y, J. Worden – n, B. Melofchik – y, B. Cohen – y, C. Barry – abstain, C. Tee – abstain, M. Bush – y. Approved 4-1-2. M. Bush moved to approve the application as presented subject to use of the rear location shown. Seconded by B. Melofchik. Roll call vote: M. Bush – y, B. Cohen – y, B. Melofchik – y, D. Baldwin – n, C. Barry – abstained, C. Tee – abstained, J. Worden – abstained. 3 in favor, 3 abstained and 1 no so it doesn't pass.

J. Worden said a neighbor would object anyhow so would have to have formal hearing. In response to a question, D Baldwin pointed out that the front porch isn't the front wall of the house and this proposed location is not anywhere near being behind the front façade. D. Baldwin also noted that, on reflection, he reconsidered his position on the insignificance of this item and voted "no" so that there could be a formal hearing to consider the project and hear from neighbors. M. Bush quoted from the guidelines. M. Bush said in his mind this bed is 100% completely compliant. In any case we say we will approve beds sympathetic to architecture of the house. C. Barry said whole issue of raised beds is hot topic in the neighborhood. He feels the neighborhood deserves the right to have a formal hearing. S. Makowka noted that the feedback to applicant is that a formal hearing is needed and interested parties need opportunity to speak.

6. Old Business

- a. **Avon Place and Central Street Historic District vacant commissioner seats** – S. Makowka to follow up with ne Commissioner.
- b. **Report from Streetscape sub-committee** No report
- c. **Modification of Design Guidelines (Fiberglass Gutters and Raised Beds/Planters) and Warrant Article Submission.** S. Makowka wants to put revised guidelines on website but noted that they needed to be annotated to indicated that Fiberglass Gutters need to still be approved by Town Meeting and MA Attorney Gneral and he'd rather not delay publishing everything else because of the extended timeline for approval on

the gutters. M. Bush feels it is a reasonable approach. He will update the language in a draft and send it to S. Makowka so that the Commission can vote on it..

- d. **Discussion on Warrant Article Submission** – M. bush noted that it was driven by Westminster Ave. homeowner unhappy for being denied solar panels. This is from the relatively early days of solar panels on the HDC and this was on the front façade. B. Melofchik suggested that we have a future discussion about the primary façade treatment. She feels street facing houses need added consideration and more plans. It needs to be a serious discussion in the near future.

7. Review of projects

- 8. Meeting Adjourns - 10:24pm.** J. Worden moved to adjourn, seconded by B. Cohen. Unanimous roll call to adjourn.